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Letter dated 7 October 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I wish to strongly protest the unwarranted and vehement attacks made by the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Ileka Atoki, against my country and the person of President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni as contained in Security Council document S/2005/620. The allegations are not only misrepresentations, but they are also false and a figment of the imagination. Uganda would like to believe that the Permanent Representative is totally unaware of the high level of cooperation that is taking place between the Government of Uganda on the one hand, and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the other.

Let me now comment on some of the assertions m de by the Permanent Representative.

(a) Uganda's expression of concern over the presence of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Garamba National Park in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo is an affront to the international community and a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations

One fails to understand why pointing out the presence of these terrorists on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is an affront to international community or a violation of the Charter of the United Nations. Be that as it may, the threat to international peace and security is currently posed by negative forces, mainly the LRA and other negative forces, including the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU) and the People's Redemption Army (PRA), presently stationed on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As a responsible and sovereign State, Uganda is expected to guarantee peace and security of her citizens, who, for an extended period of time, have been terrorized by these armed groups, using the territory of some neighbouring States as bases from which to attack Uganda. Uganda has an obligation to defend itself if attacked, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. There is no planned attack on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and none is envisaged.

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(b) That the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo harbours no hidden agenda against any of its neighbours

Uganda has heard these assertions several times before from officials at various levels of leadership in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She has every reason to believe them. All that Uganda points out is that for a long time now various groups of anti-Uganda rebels, including the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU) and the People's Redemption Army (PRA), have been stationed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The international community, under the Lusaka Peace Accord and various resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, have called for their disarmament, demobilization and resettlement. It is Uganda's hope that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUC will do everything possible to disarm these negative elements. The authorities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have an international obligation to make sure that their country is not used as a base from where these rebels come to attack Uganda.

We are encouraged that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has taken steps to act against the LRA terrorists who entered their country from the Sudan.

(c) That the LRA does not have the capacity to harm the Government of Uganda

This allegation is most unfortunate. The danger posed by LRA to the civilian population is internationally well known. To do nothing about such an evil group under the ill-advised pretext that it poses no threat to the Government is to abdicate the cardinal responsibility of any State, that is, to guarantee the safety of its citizens. Moreover, to link the performance of this duty to electoral politics is to engage in extreme absurdity. Uganda's leadership under President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni is above such unprincipled politics. It is unfortunate that the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has taken on the role of a devil's advocate.

(d) The determination of Uganda's business sector to provide weapons to the armed groups in the district of Ituri

This is a contemptuous allegation that the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo can neither prove nor substantiate. Ugandan businessmen do not trade in arms and therefore have no arms to give to the armed groups in Ituri. It is interesting to note that some of these armed groups may be getting their weapons from within the Democratic Republic of the Congo itself, as pointed out by the Secretary-General in his nineteenth report on MONUC (S/2005/603) to the Security Council. It is, therefore, obscurantist to accuse Ugandan businessmen of arms trafficking.

(e) Uganda's support for Congolese militia

Uganda does not support any Congolese militia as alleged by the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Uganda treasures peace and believes that the current instability in the Great Lakes Region is a disincentive to development. Peace will enhance development and lift the region from its present poverty. Uganda believes that a stable, prosperous and well-led Democratic Republic of the Congo is good both for herself and for the region. It is also easier and more rewarding to deal with a stable and predictable neighbour.

It is with this desire for peace that Uganda has been an active participant in the regional peace processes, including the Great Lakes Conference and the Tripartite Commission Plus One, among others. Through this participation and through bilateral contacts, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have worked together on the evolution of some credible mechanisms geared towards the realization of durable peace, such as the Joint Verification Mechanism, the Intelligence Sharing Mechanism and bilateral joint commissions. The Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo should be aware of Uganda's action of declaring personae non grata six leaders of the Movement révolutionaire congolais (MRC) as reported in Security Council document S/2005/603. Surely this cannot be interpreted as support for the militia.

(f) Recommendations for action by the international community

The Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in his ill-advised manner, calls on the international community to undertake various measures against Uganda and her leadership. His recommendations, contemptuous and outrageous as they are, can only serve to increase instability in the region. They reflect the mind of an individual far removed from the realities on the ground.

Since the entry of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) into the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda has worked with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to find a solution. We have made numerous contacts with them at various levels to urge them to take firm and prompt steps to disarm and arrest these terrorists and hand them over to MONUC for prosecution for crimes against humanity committed over the years. These contacts have ranged from telephone discussions between President Yoweri K. Museveni and President Joseph Kabila, meetings between Uganda security officers and their counterparts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to meetings between respective local leaders on either side of our common border, with the full participation of MONUC.

In all these contacts, the Government of Uganda has reiterated its adherence to, and support for, all bilateral, regional and international agreements and arrangements governing the peaceful relations between our two countries. Uganda's sole interest and unequivocal demand has been that the LRA terrorists should be promptly disarmed, arrested and brought to justice. At no time has the Government of the Republic of Uganda or its armed forces made any overt or covert attempt to enter the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to attack the LRA terrorists.

The Government of the Republic of Uganda was, therefore, deeply shocked by the strident and unprovoked attacks perpetrated by the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are convinced that the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is critically unaware of the healthy dialogue that is going on between the two Governments aimed at the restoration of full diplomatic relations and cooperation between our two countries as well as peace throughout the region.

Accordingly, the Government of the Republic of Uganda has demanded that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo reign in its Permanent Representative and recommit itself to the ongoing process of cooperation in peaceful resolution of all outstanding issues between the two countries. In this immediate case, the Govenment of the Republic of Uganda has expressed her

confidence that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will continue to implement all necessary measures to apprehend and disarm Vincent Otti and his LRA terrorists currently within its territory.

The LRA and other negative forces constitute the real source of tension and potential conflict in relations between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Government of the Republic of Uganda requests that the United Nations Security Council take adequate and urgent measures to ensure that the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUC are given all the necessary assistance to disarm and demobilize these negative forces. It is only after such action that durable and lasting peace shall be realized.

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the present letter to be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Francis K. **Butagira**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative